The following claims are presented for examination:

1. - 19. (Cancelled)

20. (**Currently Amended**) A method comprising:

receiving, at a data processing system, a requirement from a prospective purchaser for a first chemical**, wherein the requirement is based on a uniform standard for said first chemical**;

comparing, **by a computer** in said data processing system, said requirement to analyses of batches of said first chemical that are available for purchase from at least two different suppliers through said data processing system to identify a batch that satisfies said requirement, wherein said analyses are obtained from a testing facility that tests samples of said batches in accordance with [[a]] **said** uniform standard ~~that is established~~ for said first chemical, and further wherein each batch that is available for purchase is analyzed by said testing facility; and

outputting, from said data processing system, an indicium of said identified batch to said prospective purchaser**;**

wherein said data processing system comprises said computer, and further comprises a data storage device that stores said uniform standard for the first chemical and said analyses.

21. (**Canceled**)

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 further comprising:

compiling statistics in said data processing system, said statistics comprising information about purchases of said first chemical and purchases of other chemicals facilitated by said data processing system; and

outputting said statistics to a statistics subscriber.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 wherein said identified batch of said first chemical is priced below a price at which said first chemical is normally sold.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 wherein said uniform standard is developed by owners/operators of said data processing system.

25. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 20 wherein said indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of said identified batch and a brand name of said first chemical in said identified batch.

26. (**Currently Amended**) The method of claim 20 comprising storing said analyses in an inventory database **residing in said data storage device**.

27. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 26 comprising:

obtaining further analyses of further batches of said first chemical, wherein said further batches are analyzed in accordance with said uniform standard established for said first chemical; and

updating said inventory database by inputting said further analyses into said inventory database.

28. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 26 comprising:

obtaining analyses of batches of a second chemical, wherein said batches are analyzed in accordance with a uniform standard established for said second chemical; and

updating said inventory database by inputting said analyses of batches of said second chemical into said inventory database.

29. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 20 comprising storing said requirement in a requirements database.

30. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 20 wherein said requirement comprises an allowable range of values for at least some of said physical and chemical characteristics that define said uniform standard, the method further comprising assigning a rank to at least one of said physical characteristics or chemical characteristics, wherein a value of said rank indicates a relative importance of satisfying said one physical characteristic or chemical characteristic in determining whether or not a batch satisfies said requirement.

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31. (**Currently Amended**) A method comprising:

outputting, from **offering to a prospective purchaser, by** a data processing system, a uniform standard for a chemical, said uniform standard **being** defined by a supplier-independent set of physical and chemical characteristics of said chemical;

receiving, at said data processing system, a requirement from **[[a]]** **the** prospective purchaser for said chemical, wherein said requirement comprises an allowable range of values for at least some of said physical and chemical characteristics that define said uniform standard, and wherein said chemical is available for purchase via said data processing system; and

comparing **based on said uniform standard**, **[[via]]** **by a computer in** said data processing system, said requirement to analyses of a plurality of batches of said chemical that are available for purchase through said data processing system, wherein each batch that is available for purchase is analyzed by said testing facility**, and further wherein said analyses are stored in said data storage device;**

wherein said data processing system comprises said data storage device, said computer, a first network interface to said prospective purchaser, and a second network interface to said testing facility.

32. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 31 further comprising storing said requirement in said data processing system.

33. (**Canceled**)

34. (**Previously Amended**) The method of claim 31 further comprising outputting, from said data processing system, an indicium of at least one batch of said chemical, of said plurality thereof, that satisfies said requirement.

35. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 34 wherein said indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of said one batch and a brand name of said first chemical in said one batch.

36. (**Currently Amended**) The method of claim 31 further comprising:
compiling statistics in said data processing system, said statistics comprising information about purchases of said chemical facilitated by said data processing system;
storing said statistics in said data storage device; and

outputting said statistics to an interested party.

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37. (**Previously Presented**) A method comprising:

receiving, at a data processing system, a requirement from a prospective purchaser for a first chemical**, wherein said requirement is based on a uniform standard for said first chemical, and further wherein said uniform standard is stored in a data storage device**;

comparing, **by a computer** in said data processing system, said requirement to analyses of batches of said first chemical that are available for purchase through said data processing system to identify a batch that satisfies said requirement, wherein said analyses are obtained from a testing facility that tests samples of said batches in accordance **[[a]] said** uniform standard ~~that is established~~ for said first chemical, and wherein each batch that is available for purchase is analyzed by said testing facility**;**

wherein said data processing system comprises said data storage device, said computer, a first network interface to said prospective purchaser, and a second network interface for obtaining said analyses from said testing facility.

38. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 37 further comprising outputting, from said data processing system, an indicium of said identified batch to said prospective purchaser, wherein said indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of said identified batch and a brand name of said first chemical in said identified batch.

39. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 37 further comprising:

obtaining analyses of additional batches of said first chemical, wherein said additional batches are analyzed in accordance with said uniform standard established for said first chemical; and

updating an inventory database by inputting said additional analyses into said inventory database.

40. (**Previously Presented**) The method of claim 36 wherein said requirement comprises a range of acceptable values for at least some of a plurality of characteristics that define said uniform standard, the method further comprising assigning a rank to at least

one of said characteristics, wherein a value of said rank indicates a relative importance of satisfying said one characteristic in determining whether or not a batch satisfies said requirement.

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41. (New) A method comprising:

receiving, by a data processing system, a uniform standard for a chemical;

receiving, by the data processing system, analyses of batches of the chemical, wherein the analyses are based on testing according to the uniform standard;

storing the uniform standard in a uniform standards database and the analyses in an inventory database, wherein a data storage device in the data processing system stores the databases;

offering the batches of the chemical for sale by the data processing system, wherein the offering enables a prospective purchaser to submit a requirement for the chemical according to the uniform standard; and

in response to receiving the requirement from the prospective purchaser, identifying by the data processing system based on the analyses stored in the inventory database a batch that satisfies the requirement.

42. (New) The method of claim 41 further comprising:

transmitting an indicium of the identified batch to the prospective purchaser, wherein the indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of the identified batch and a brand name of the chemical in the identified batch.

43. (New) the method of claim 41 further wherein:

the uniform standard is supplier-independent, and

the batches of the chemical are from at least two suppliers, and

the requirement is supplier-independent and is based on the uniform standard.

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44. (New) A method comprising:

obtaining, by a data processing system, analyses of batches of a chemical, wherein the analyses are the results of testing according to a uniform standard for the chemical, and wherein the uniform standard is defined by a set of physical and chemical characteristics of the chemical;

storing the analyses in an inventory database in the data processing system;

offering the batches of the chemical for sale by the data processing system, wherein the offering is according to the characteristics defining the uniform standard;

receiving, by the data processing system, a requirement for the chemical from a prospective purchaser, wherein the requirement is based on at least one characteristic defining the uniform standard;

identifying, by a computer in the data processing system, based on the requirement and the analyses stored in the inventory database, a batch that satisfies the requirement; and

transmitting an indicium of the identified batch to the prospective purchaser.

45. (**New**) The method of claim 44 wherein the indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of the identified batch and a brand name of the chemical in the identified batch.

46. (New) the method of claim 44 further wherein:

the uniform standard is supplier-independent, and

the batches of the chemical are from at least two suppliers, and

the requirement is supplier-independent and is based on the uniform standard.

47. (New) A data processing system comprising:

a data storage device for storing (i) a uniform standard for a chemical, the uniform standard being defined by a set of physical and chemical characteristics of the chemical, and (ii) an inventory database comprising analyses of batches of the chemical, wherein each analysis is the result of testing of a batch of the chemical according to the uniform standard for the chemical;

a network interface for communicating between the data processing system and at least one of a testing facility that performs the testing according to the uniform standard, a supplier of a batch of the chemical, a prospective purchaser, and a subscriber;

a computer for:

(i) offering for sale the batches of the chemical from the inventory database,

(ii) receiving requirements according to the uniform standard for the chemical, wherein the requirements are submitted by the prospective purchaser via the network interface, and

(iii) identifying, from the analyses of the chemical in the inventory database, a batch of the chemical that satisfied the requirement from the prospective purchaser.

48. (**New**) The data processing system of claim 47 wherein the computer is also for:

(iv) transmitting an indicium of the identified batch to the prospective purchaser, wherein the indicium does not provide any information selected from the group consisting of a supplier of the identified batch and a brand name of the chemical in the identified batch.

49. (New) The data processing system of claim 47 further wherein:

the uniform standard is supplier-independent, and

the batches of the chemical are from at least two suppliers, and

the requirement is supplier-independent and is based on the uniform standard.